



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

NOVEMBER 22, 2016

MINUTES

MEETING AT SOMERVILLE CITY HALL
93 HIGHLAND AVENUE
3RD FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
7:00 PM

Meeting notes prepared by Vanessa Boukili, based on a recording of the meeting.

Commission Members in attendance: Michael Fager, Mathias Neuber, Rachel Borgatti, Jamie Lefkowitz, David Turin, Owen Wartella

Commission Members absent: Matthew Liebhold

Others in Attendance: Cheryl Greenwald

Staff: Brad Rawson, Vanessa Boukili (Conservation Agent)

Mathias Neuber brought the meeting to order at 7:04 followed by introductions.

New Business: (7:07)

1. Conservation Agent introduction and onboarding

- a. Vanessa Boukili is the city's new Urban Forester & Landscape Planner, and Conservation Agent. Background: PhD in Plant Ecology, Massachusetts Certified Arborist. Prepared to do all Conservation Agent duties.
- b. Community Gardens: need to reach out to gardeners and organize meeting this winter. Ask gardeners what they need, create scope of work/ job description (can pay \$500 per year). Duties include: managing garden spots, determining what spots are vacant and reallocating people on the waitlist to open spots. Also, point of contact for all garden organizers.

2. Fall 2016 Assembly Square Water Quality Monitoring report (7:15)

- a. Background: MWRA controls an 84" CSO outfall pipe for big storm events that runs along the Mystic River. This pipe is full, and the infrastructure needs improvements. A new 72" drainage outfall pipe was constructed by Federal Realty Investment Trust (FRIT) in Assembly Square to accommodate their development. This new stormwater pipe outfall borders Draw 7 Park. One of FRIT's goals for their post-construction storm water system was that it meets state stormwater guidelines, which stipulate 80% removal of total suspended solids. They proposed that they were going to meet this limit by putting in water quality units. Conservation Commission told them that citing sources was not sufficient. Thus, their initial order of conditions (OOC) requires that they monitor quality by testing stormwater discharge for 3

years (4 times per year for 3 years). Another condition of their OOC stated that they have to return to the Conservation Commission and reapply whenever there is a new tie-in to the stormwater pipe.

- b. Owen mentioned that under the current MA regulations, the water quality units are tested for removing 80% of TSS during a ½” storm event. However, it is impossible to replicate this test under the conditions of the regulation requirement, as storm events are never exactly ½”. Tests are completed on random storm events, which are generally >1”–3” events. New regulations are currently being developed that can actually be tested.
 - i. Although it is difficult to accurately test whether or not the standard is being met, monitoring is important.
- c. VHB water quality monitoring report shows that one sampling station failed (no TSS removed), and the other two sampling stations showed low removal percentages.
- d. At this point, VHB has completed two studies, and the results show that the water quality standard goals they set are not being met. Commissioners suggest VHB design new plan that demonstrates what they intend to update at the site to meet water quality goals, and present this plan to ConCom. The new plan should address the parcels that remain to be developed (and still need approval, ex. 5b).
- e. To sell parcel as developable piece of parcel, the parcel needs to meet regulations, which is easier to do so before the start of construction.
- f. MassDEP enforces stormwater regulations. Ultimately this stormwater infrastructure will be the city’s responsibility, as it will be part of MS4 permit. In city’s interest to make sure regulations are being met because if it’s not corrected the city will have to pay for remediation. City should ask for action now.
- g. ACTION ITEM: Conservation Agent to write letter to VHB, requesting new water quality plan and stating that they are not in compliance with OOC (not sampling enough, not meeting standards when do sample). Request that VHB meets with one or more of our city Engineers to develop the plan. Invite VHB to Jan ConCom meeting.

3. 5 Middlesex Avenue MEPA ENF filing (7:41)

- a. Two million sf development proposed for 10 acre block. Plan is to retain the current office building and develop the rest in phases. They are requesting a hardship waiver for Phase One development.
- b. Infill development at Assembly is consistent with City’s Comprehensive plan (ex. commercial tax base, affordable housing options, and mitigation payments from developers). But, this ENF has some deficiencies, and lacks details. Comment period ends tomorrow; city is preparing a letter.
- c. Letter will stress that development must adhere to stormwater policy for Inflow/Infiltration (I/I) mitigation. Phase 1 (~150 apartments, 190 hotel keys): net increase wastewater generation ~ 50,000 gallons.
- d. Letter from City will also stress that the street grid and public realm plan for the project’s full buildout be constructed in Phase One.
- e. ENF mentions LEED goals, but does not explain which level of LEED.
- f. ENF asserts that they do not need any local permits, but there is not enough detail to assess if that is true.
- g. Where is stormwater going? Tied-in to CSO or 72” outfall pipe? ENF mentioned connection to pipe at Foley St. Need clarification of which pipe that is. Appears that tie-in is to 72” outfall pipe, in which case they are within ConCom jurisdiction. Need to provide more details and come before ConCom to describe plan to determine if they will fall into jurisdiction or not. Because site is currently impervious and they are going to green it, they can likely meet any stormwater goal.
- h. Although Somerville doesn’t currently have set of stormwater standards, recently submitted request to Board of Alderman to turn Engineering’s stormwater policy into an ordinance.
- i. ConCom to provide additional comment letter. Letter will ask for details about outfall tie-in, the layout of open space, and will also stress the difficulty of assessing the request for a waiver based on the information provided.

4. Somerville Avenue sewer work informational discussion (8:01)



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- a. Background: Few years ago \$25 million state assisted sewer separation construction project on Somerville Ave. to install big box culvert from Porter Square down to Union Square. Project was managed by Mass Dot. Resulted in bottleneck at the heart of Union Square, where three drains converge: 36+ inch drain from Summer St. drain from Spring Hill, 6 foot concrete box culvert from Somerville Ave., 60 inch drain coming down Washington St.
- b. Combined sewer overflow remains for ~100 foot section of Somerville Ave (in 120 year old brick sewer in pristine condition). Plan to build out 14 foot concrete box culvert in this area, to function in conveyance and detention. There are a couple of sediment traps throughout corridor, and ends at CMI interceptor (MWRA facility) on Somerville Ave. by Target and waste transfer facility. Plan to go out to bid in late winter. Estimated cost ~\$40 million. Governor Baker awarded Somerville \$13 million MassWorks grant for the project. Other financing from Board and Union Square developers.
- c. An additional ~0.5 mile that will need to be dealt with later to complete the stormwater separation system.
- d. Discussion included how the stormwater separation system may be completed, some general information about Somerville's water treatment, as well as how the Somerville Ave sewer separation construction project will affect farmers market, and if the underground infrastructure is of interest to the Historic Preservation Commission.

Other Business (8:27)

1. Recreational field plan - installing artificial turf on DCR properties.
 - a. Properties under ConCom jurisdiction include Draw 7 and Dilboy.
 - b. DCR/City needs to come before ConCom early on in design process.
2. Board Order currently in Open Space, Environment and Energy Special Committee.
 - a. Item on agenda for Wednesday, November 30th, requests Commission Chair to attend in order to get to know Commission better. Will ask for continuance as Mathias will be out of town.
3. Vacant commission seat.
 - a. Advertisement has not yet been published by communication team.
 - b. Discussion for how to have targeted advertising to get diversity of applicants. Ex. SomerViva, Resistat.

Approval of minutes

1. Approved Oct 25, 2016 minutes with four amendments at 8:34.

Adjourn

1. Motion to adjourn- Michael Fager
2. Second- Owen Wartella
3. All in favor: 8:45

For more information contact Vanessa Boukili at 617-625-6600 x 2516.

